UNITED STATES PACIFIC FLEET

AIR FORCE

FLEET AIRSHIP WING THIRTY-ONE

CONFIDENTIAL

REPORT FOR COMMANDER FLEET AIRSHIP WING THIRTY-ONE

19 May 1943

1. Operations for the Day:

AirshipRon 31. (a) K-20 departed Santa Ana at 0540, patrolled from 0552 to 1735, and landed at 1756. Visibility was 20 miles, with northwest wind of 5 knots. (b) K-29 departed Santa Ana at 0506, patrolled from 0517 to 1708, and landed at 1740. Visibility was 25 miles, with 10 knot northwest wind. (c) K-43 left Santa Ana at 0521, patrolled from 0530 to 1805, and returned at 1840. Visibility was 35 miles, with 10 knot northwest wind.

AirshipRon 32. (a) K-27 left Moffett Field at 0527 on escort mission, landing at Watsonville 1401. Visibility was 10 miles with northwest winds of 18 to 30 knots. Airship took off again at 1430 to provide air coverage for mission. (b) K-35 departed Moffett Field at 0446, escorted convoy from 0615 to 1015, and returned to base at 1202. Visibility was 4 miles, with 500 foot ceiling and 15 knot northwest wind. Airship departed at 1224 on training mission to observe submarine exercises, returning at 1653. Airship took off again at 1711, escorted convoy from 1950 to 2100, and landed at 2208. Visibility was 10 miles, with clear sky and 10 knot north northwest wind.

AirshipRon 33. (a) K-33 left Tillamook at 0754 on special submarine search, landed at 1959, and took off again at 2032 to continue search. Before 1500, ceiling and visibility were unlimited, with southwest wind of 5 knots; after 1500, wind veered to west, with visibility zero to 600 yards. (b) K-39 left Tillamook at 0745 on submarine search, landed at 1654, and took off to continue search at 1735.

2. Ordnance Expenditures:

K-39, Squadron 33, dropped one Mark 17 depth bomb as follow-up to attack by SC-356.

3. Material and Operational Features:

In accordance with orders from Commander, Northwestern Sea Frontier, K-39 arrived at 0815 at position 45°27'N., 124°20'W. to conduct submarine search. Airship established

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3. Material and Operational Features: (Cont'd)

communication with PC-815 on the scene and was informed that latter had been maintaining sound contact with a submarine since 0230. PC-815 made intermittent sound contacts throughout the morning. K-33 arrived on the scene of action at 0930; and SC-356, at 1215. At 1430, SC-356 laid a pattern of two depth charges. At 1435, K-39 dropped one depth bomb using sound ranges and bearings transmitted over scene of action circuit, together with signals from airship's MAD equipment. Airship sighted SC-357 at 1612, and left for base at 1615. K-33 witnessed four attacks by surface craft, of which only the second indicated any results. About 15 seconds after the explosion disturbance reached the surface and 20 feet astern of it, an air bubble 15 feet in diameter broke surface. Air continued to surface at this spot for about 15 seconds, but no oil or debris were evident. About 1800, while investigating a sound contact of the PC-815, one competent observer in the K-33 and and another reliable man saw a periscope emerge for about 8 seconds and then disappear. The periscope wake was abeam to starboard, about 100 yards distant. Surface craft were advised, a flare dropped, and MAD search began. Half an hour later, surface craft established a sound contact and made a three charge attack without visible results. K-33 was relieved at 1930 by the K-39. PC-815 and SC-536 subsequently dropped two charges each, on sound contacts. K-33 relieved K-39 at 2135.

20 May 1943

1. Operations for the Day:

AirshipRon 31. (a) K-20 departed Santa Ana at 1048, escorted mission from 1645 to 2000, and landed at 2238. Visibility was 4 miles, with northwest wind of 30 knots. (b) K-29 left Santa Ana at 0523, patrolled from 0542 to 1800, and returned at 1843. Visibility was 6 miles, with northwest winds of 10 to 30 knots. (c) K-43 left Santa Ana at 0347, escorted mission from 0627 to 1515, and landed at 1711. Visibility was 10 miles, with 10 knot northwest wind.

AirshipRon 32. (a) K-25 departed Moffett Field at 0345 to escort convoy. Airship was unable to contact mission due to unfavorable weather, and patrolled Sector 12 from 1000 to 1300, landing Watsonville at 1407. Airship took off at 1428, patrolled Sector 12 with 40 percent coverage, and



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1. Operations for the Day: (Cont'd)

returned to Watsonville at 2031. Visibility was 2 to 10 miles, with northwest winds of 30 to 35 knots. (b) K-27 returned from escort mission at 0308. Airship took off at 0447, patrolled Sector 10 from 0525 with 75 percent coverage, and returned to Moffett Field at 1134. Visibility was 1 to 7 miles, with 30 knot northwest wind. Airship departed again at 1202 and escorted convoy from 1625 to 2053. Visibility was 5 miles, with 40 knot northwest wind. (c) K-35 left Moffett Field at 0403, escorted convoy from 0620 to 1533, and returned at 1622. Visibility was 3 miles, with 30 knot northwest wind.

AirshipRon 33. (a) K-39 returned to Tillamook at 0013 and departed to continue submarine search at 0559, landing at 1442. Airship took off again at 1932. Visibility was 2 to 15 miles, with southerly winds of 10 knots. (b) K-33 returned to Tillamook at 0734 and departed to continue submarine search at 1307, landing at 2200, Visibility was 2 miles to unlimited, with westerly winds of 3 to 10 knots.

2. Ordnance Expenditures:

K-33 and K-39, Squadron 33, each dropped four Mark 17 depth bombs in anti-submarine attacks.

3. Material and Operational Features:

K-39 relieved K-33 at 0630 on station west southwest of Cape Meares. At 0730 SC-536 made depth charge attack on oil slick without apparent results. At 1240, K-39 made strong magnetic contact 12 miles west northwest of Cape Lookout. PC-815 made sound contact in same area and attacked at 1310. K-39 made visual and MAD examination of area with negative results.

K-33 relieved K-39 at 1337. At 1345, PC-815 made sound contact and attacked with negative results. At 1945, K-33 made a sequence of excellent MAD contacts, which PC-815 confirmed with sound contact, verified by propeller noise, and attacked. K-33 followed up by dropping four bombs, two set for 125 foot depth and two for 50 foot depth, spaced so as to extend surface craft pattern in direction of estimated target track. There were no apparent results. Location was 45°14'N., 124°03'W.

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3. Material and Operations Features: (Cont'd)

K-39 reached the scene at 2016. SC-537 and Coast Guard vessel each had sound contacts and attacked. K-39 followed immediately at 2030 with two Mark 17 depth bombs, set for 125 feet. At 2038 an air bubble about 12 feet in diameter broke the surface one thousand yards northwest of the location of the last attack. At 2050, SC-536 attacked where air bubble was seen. Sound and MAD search were continued without regaining contact. It was observed that the series of explosions destroyed a large school of fish. Attack was made 7 miles off Cape Lookout, bearing 020°T. K-33 left for base at 2130.

21 May 1943

1. Changes in Organization:

K-47 was delivered to Squadron 32 for operation this date.

2. Operations for the Day:

AirshipRon 31. (a) K-30 left Santa Ana at 0659, escorted mission from 0852 to 1532, and returned to base at 1629. Visibility was 5 miles, with west northwest wind of 4 knots. (b) K-21 left Moffett Field at 1617 on patrol and ferry flight to Santa Ana, arriving at 2213. (c) K-29 left Santa Ana at 1112, was unable to make contact with mission due to zero-zero conditions, patrolled from 1553 to 1740, and returned at 2012. (d) K-43 departed Santa Ana at 0817, escorted convoy from 1225 to 2015, and landed at 2233. Visibility was 2 miles, with 20 knot northwest wind.

AirshipRon 32. (a) K-27 returned to Moffett Field from escort mission at 0029. Airship departed at 0539, provided air coverage for convoy from 0658 to 1413, and landed at 1506. Visibility was 8 miles, with 14 knot northwest wind. Airship took off again at 1528 on training flight,,returning at 1846. (b) K-25 left Watsonville at 0545, escorted convoy at 0800 to 1730, and returned at 2022. (c) K-35 left Moffett Field at 0725, escorted mission from 0830 to 1710, and landed at 1803. Visibility was 8 miles, with north northwest wind of 35 knots.

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2. Operations for the Day: (Cont'd)

AirshipRon 33. (a) K-39 returned to Tillamook at 0709 from submarine search. Airship departed at 1312 to continue search, returning at 1740. Visibility was 3 miles, with 200 foot ceiling and 25 knot southerly winds. (b) K-33 departed Tillamook at 0600 on submarine search and returned at 1442. Visibility was zero to 5000 yards, with ceiling zero to 300 feet, and 20 knot southerly winds.

3. Ordnance Expenditures:

K-33, Squadron 33, dropped two Mark 17 depth bombs after getting MAD contacts.

4. Material and Operational Features:

K-33 relieved K-39 in area of submarine search at 0630. There had been no contact since 0000. At 0715, K-33 had strong MAD contact at 45°15'30"N., 124°08'W. PC-815 reported sound contact in same location and opened machine gun fire at point beneath the airship, reporting periscope sighted. K-33 saw no visual evidence of submarine, but obtained 5 excellent MAD contacts. Two depth bombs set at 125 feet were dropped simultaneously by the airship without apparent result on a sixth MAD contact. Explosion of bombs was in center of flares dropped on successive contacts, grouped in area about 75 feet square. K-33 and PC-815 continued to get contacts, and surface craft laid a patern of four depth charges. Contact was thereafter lost, and MAD search was unproductive.

K-39 relieved K-33 at 1400 and made a radar search some 50 miles seaward between Cape Falcon and Cascade Head. No further contacts were made by airship or surface craft. At 1700, Commander, Northwestern Sea Frontier, authorized discontinuance of search.

22 May 1943

1. Operations for the Day:

AirshipRon 31. (a) K-20 departed Santa Ana at 1027, patrolled from 1043 to 2027, and returned to base at 2053. Visibility was 2 miles, with 5 knot southeast wind. (b) K-21 departed Santa Ana at 0428 on escort mission and landed at 1632.